

USP Florence Administrative Maximum Security (ADX) Inspection Report And USP Florence-High Survey Report



USP Florence ADX

(photo by Federal Bureau of Prisons)

**District of Columbia
Corrections Information Council**

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children.” In discussing their desire to move closer to DC, the majority of respondents felt that being closer their homes, families, and communities would improve their chances of successful reentry. One inmate wrote that he wants to be closer to D.C., “because I would have the opportunity to reach out to people who could better help me with my reentry, and being in the city I am able to be better informed of what programs are offered in D.C.”

II. ADX Units

As the most secure prison in the BOP, almost all inmates are kept alone in their cells for nearly the entire day. In most units, inmates are allowed out of their cells for visitation, some forms of medical treatment, access to a computer with legal materials, and limited recreation time.

A. Referral to ADX

In response to the CIC survey, DC inmates reported that they were referred to Florence ADX from several facilities. USP Lewisburg and USP Marion were the facilities with the largest amount of referrals, with seven and four referrals, respectively. During the on-site inspection, staff stated that 92% of inmates at the Florence ADX were designated to the facility due to discipline issues at other BOP facilities.

One individual provided the CIC with a hearing administrator’s report from his appeal regarding his placement in the general population units at Florence ADX. In the report from January 2015, the hearing administrator found that the inmate “meets the criteria for placement in the ADX-GP” based on his institutional conduct between 1988 and 1994. The inmate was transferred to Florence ADX in 1995.

B. Housing Units

Florence ADX has nine housing units, and the facility operates its housing units on the basis of six security levels. They are listed below in order of most to least restrictive.

“**Range 13**” is a four-cell wing of the Special Housing Unit (or “SHU”). There were no incarcerated DC men on Range 13 at the time of the inspection. It is the most restrictive and most isolated area within Florence ADX. The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General reported a psychologist at Florence ADX describing solitary confinement on Range 13, saying, “You have no contact, you don’t speak to anybody, and it’s a form of torture on some level.”¹¹

The **Control Unit** (Bravo Unit) is the most secure housing unit. Inmates are referred to the unit based on behavioral incidents and are provided an opportunity for a hearing prior to placement.¹² Inmates in the Control Unit are isolated at all times, including recreation, and remain in their cells for 23 to 24 hours a day. Inmate’s behavior and compliance with the institutional and unit rules are assessed monthly. If an inmate does not maintain clear conduct for an entire month, then the inmate does not receive time served for any days in that month. The Control Unit has 78 cells. At the time of the inspection, 77 inmates were housed in the Control Unit, and additional inmates were housed in the Control Unit overflow section of the SHU. Three inmates in the Control Unit were from DC, including one who was housed in the overflow section of the SHU. Prior to the inspection, the

¹¹ Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Justice, *Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons’ Use of Restrictive Housing for Inmates with Mental Illness* (July 2017), p. 16. <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2017/e1705.pdf>.

¹² Federal Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Department of Justice, Program Statement No. 5212.07, Control Unit Programs (Feb. 20, 2001), http://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5212_007.pdf.

facility reported that 89 inmates were designated to the Control Unit, and that 18 of those inmates were diagnosed with a mental health issue.

The **Special Security Unit** (Hotel Unit, or H Unit) is for inmates who have “special administrative measures” (SAMs) imposed on them.¹³ According to staff, SAMs restrictions always come from judicial orders. Typically, the judicial orders result from incidents where individuals threaten a witness or present a communication concern, such as being a leader of a gang or involvement in terrorism. At the time of inspection, no individuals from DC were housed on the unit.

The **Special Housing Unit** (“SHU” or Charlie Unit) was serving as the housing unit for inmates who had newly arrived at the facility and for additional individuals from the Control Unit, according to staff during the inspection. At most facilities, the SHU is a lockdown housing unit for inmates who have been sanctioned for disciplinary reasons or who need additional protection. During the inspection, however, staff explained that Florence ADX stopped using the unit as a traditional SHU in the beginning of 2016 because disciplinary sanctions can be imposed on any unit since the entire facility is always on lockdown. Following the inspection, the CIC received reports that inmates are still taken from their current housing units and moved to the SHU to serve time for disciplinary sanctions. The unit housed 48 inmates total, including one DC inmate in the Control Unit overflow population.

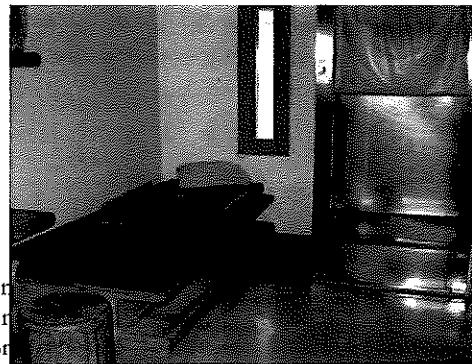
The **general population units** (Delta, Echo, Fox, and Golf Units) operate similarly to the Control Unit, with some additional privileges, including up to two hours of out-of-cell time per weekday. In the general population housing units, inmates are isolated in their cells for at least 22 hours a day.

The **Step-Down Units** (Joker and Step-Down Unit Bravo) are where inmates are still confined to their cells for most of the day, but are permitted limited but direct contact with other inmates. These units are the phases from the most restrictive housing units, above, to the general federal prison population. Information specific to the Step-Down Program and its process is included below.

The **Kilo Unit** is the least restrictive housing unit at Florence ADX. Staff reported that it primarily houses inmates who were designated to the ADX due to concerns regarding their safety, including high profile inmates and/or those who may be a threat or target to other inmates, and therefore cannot be housed in another institution. To be eligible for placement in Kilo Unit, inmates must have no history of assaults on staff and be incident free for three consecutive years.

C. Cell Descriptions

Except for the Step-Down Units, the cells in the housing units at Florence ADX are arranged in a “linear design” down one side of a hallway (called the “unit range”), which prevents inmates from seeing each other. The cells measure approximately seven by 12 feet, with a poured concrete bed, desk, and stool, and a stainless steel combination sink and



¹³ “Upon direction of the Attorney General, the Director, Bureau of Prisons, may impose special administrative measures that are reasonably necessary to protect persons from death or serious bodily injury. These procedures may be implemented upon written notification to the Attorney General or, at the Attorney General's direction, by the head of a federal law enforcement agency, or the head of a member agency of the United States intelligence community, that there is a substantial risk that a prisoner's communications or contacts with persons could result in death or serious bodily injury to persons, or substantial damage to property that would entail the risk of death or serious bodily injury to persons.” Prevention of acts of violence and terrorism, 28 C.F.R. § 501.3(a) (2010), <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2010-title28-vol2/pdf/CFR-2010-title28-vol2-sec501-3.pdf>.

toilet, as well as a shower with an automatic shut-off. The beds have handles for attaching four-point restraints. Each cell has a single, narrow window, approximately 42 inches tall by four inches wide, angled to allow inmates to see only the sky. All cells have solid exterior doors with a closable slot and an interior cell door. Inmates may be provided a radio or TV in their cells to use for programming and recreation.

In the Step-Down Units, the cells are on three sides of the unit with a common area in the middle, and the cells open directly into the common area. The cells are a similar size, but do not have an interior cell door, and open directly into the common area. The televisions and showers are located in the common area rather than in the cells. In the Kilo Unit, the common area also has a stationary bike for exercise. The front side of the units is a barred wall that separates the inmate common area from the officer area. Inmates walk up to the barred wall to receive their food trays and can leave books on the bars to be exchanged for other books requested from the library.

Each unit has an observation cell, a medical exam room, and “law library” cell on each range. The observation cell on each range is used for Suicide Watch, attorney-client phone calls, and when inmates need to be placed in restraints because they have destroyed property in their cells. The law library is a largely empty cell at the end of the range that contains a modified computer and concrete shelves.¹⁴

In the Step-Down Units, the law library computer is located in the common area. The common area also contains several tables with attached chairs. An empty cell in each unit instead contains a telephone and can be used for making both social and legal phone calls.

D. Unit Staff

The unit team staff for Florence ADX includes three Unit Managers, six case managers, and six counselors, split between the housing units. Six lieutenants are scheduled to work during the day, and four to five at night, which staff reported is more lieutenants per shift as compared to other BOP facilities. Unit staff rotates quarterly and chooses their assignments based on seniority.

A case manager in one of the general population units explained that the case managers are responsible for program reviews of inmates every six months, starting release planning when inmates are within 18 months of release, filing transfer requests, reconfiguring security points every year, reviewing central files, handling victim and witness programs, and managing separatees – who are inmates who are not supposed to be in physical or visual contact with another inmate.

According to staff, each department conducts rounds at least weekly for each unit. Department staff members conduct rounds on set schedules to see every inmate each week. Psychology Services conducts rounds at least twice a week, and sees inmates more often on request.

E. Step-Down Program

The Step-Down Program is meant to prepare inmates to function in less restrictive conditions. . According to staff, the Step-Down Program is designed as a two-year process. Inmates need one year of clear conduct (Phase 1) prior to being placed into Joker Unit (Phase 2) and usually spend six months in the unit until being transferred to USP Florence High. Inmates complete the final stages of the process at USP Florence High, where they are housed with a cellmate for three to six months before moving to another institution.

¹⁴ Additional information the law library can be found in the “Library” section, below.